

Dr. Regina Cusson and, as Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut, SB36

Good Afternoon,

My name is Dr. Regina Cusson and, as Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut, I would like to provide testimony in support of Governor's Senate Bill #36.

Thank you to Dr. Jewell Mullen and the members of the Public Health Committee for providing the opportunity to speak in favor of this legislation today.

UConn, Connecticut's largest state-affiliated university, has trained, and educated nurse practitioners – APRNs – for more than 30 years. We are proud of the fact that our graduates successfully pass the national board certification examinations in high numbers, are sought after by employers, and comprise an important part of Connecticut's primary, specialty, and acute healthcare workforce providing care to patients.

The national trend of states moving toward full practice authority already includes 17 states, plus the District of Columbia, fully one third of the nation. 4 of those states, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island, are here in New England. At least 12 other states have bills in their legislatures to follow suit. 4 of those states, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are in close proximity to our state. We face the very real possibility of losing our APRN providers to those nearby states where practice environments are more favorable than ours. As more states move to full practice authority for APRNs, restrictive states will fall behind. Already, governors of states where APRNs practice with full autonomy are proposing incentives to draw APRNs away from states like ours, with more restrictive laws. With 7 university level in-state nurse practitioner programs, Connecticut invests heavily in educating APRNs. How unfortunate will it be when we lose this precious commodity to neighboring states with more favorable practice environments?

There will be those who argue that simply changing a law because other states are doing so is not a good enough reason. However, that is simply advocating for the status quo, and ignores the strong evidence supporting this change. There is ample research to support passing Governor's Senate Bill #36. Quality outcome research studies on APRN practice are plentiful, all concluding that health care delivered by APRNs is safe, high quality, and cost-effective. Empowering APRNs to practice to the full extent of their training and education will support our health care infrastructure in Connecticut and increase healthcare access for patients. To those who would attempt to argue that passing this law would result in an end to inter-professional collaboration, nothing could be further from the truth. As an educator, I can assure you that inter-professional collaboration with all licensed health care providers is the hallmark and cornerstone of APRN training and education.

To conclude, all evidence supports passing the Governor's Senate Bill #36. I encourage our state legislators to support and vote in favor of this bill. Thank you so much for your time and attention.